

A Strategic Framework Toward a Sustainable Future



2021 - 2024

STRATEGIC

VISION

WCTE
Central TN





Do something that will last and be beautiful. It doesn't have to be a bridge-or a symphony or book or a business. It could be the look in the eye of a child you raise or a simple garden you tend. Do something that will last and be beautiful.

~ Ken Burns

ABOUT WCTE CENTRAL TENNESSEE PBS

WCTE Central Tennessee PBS, is a small, rural public media organization located in Cookeville, Tennessee and serving a fourteen county region, known as the Upper Cumberland. It is the only broadcast television station in a seventy-five mile radius of Cookeville, nestled in between Knoxville, Nashville and Chattanooga.



The station went on the air as a state licensee in 1978 with a single analog signal. In 1982, the station was transferred to a community licensee and was governed by a local board of directors, the Upper Cumberland Broadcast Council.

In 2021, the award-winning station is recognized nationally, regionally and locally as a full service PBS member with a strong emphasis on locally created content; education; public safety; and a national conduit for independent producers.

The station hosts four channels: WCTE 22.1 HD; WCTE Create 22.2; WCTE World 22.3 and WCTE PBS KIDS 22.4, as well as full service online digital streams for WCTE HD; WCTE PBS KIDS and soon to come WCTE Create!

In addition to WCTE's transmission site, the station hosts a 300 ft tower and a building dedicated to emergency services and public safety for Putnam County and the Upper Cumberland region. WCTE also has an emergency broadcast studio located in the Putnam County Emergency Operations Center, ready for live production 24/7 as needed for public safety.

WCTE currently focuses on the Upper Cumberland area, although the signal reaches 1.3 million viewers throughout Central Tennessee and southern Kentucky with over-the-air broadcast, cable and satellite services. Through the expanded use of digital content and online funding campaigns, the goal is to reach more fully outside of our current demographic.



PRESIDENT & CEO'S LETTER

WCTE Central TN PBS is poised to bring new leadership, partners, and perspective to our service to the Upper Cumberland of Central Tennessee. What will continue is our quality digital and broadcast media that inspire, educate and inform. For while a great deal has changed since 2020, our mission and commitment to the people of this region remain constant.

We are very excited about the work that went into this thoughtful and strategic plan. It will strengthen our work over the next three years and enable us to provide a broader positive impact on children, families, communities and diverse populations within our region.

WCTE PBS is a full member of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). We are governed by a local board of directors and operate under a community license that belongs to the people of the Upper Cumberland. The beauty (value?) of being a PBS, public media station is the partnership between locally supported and operated stations, and high quality nationally produced educational and noncommercial content and resources. This is an asset that our region must support, cherish and protect.

This 2021 Plan is built on a framework of six pillars: 1. Content/Distribution/Community Impact; 2. Education; 3. Visibility; 4. Sustainability; 5. Culture; and 6. Infrastructure.

We are "the people's media". As U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson said in 1967 in signing the public broadcasting act...Today, we rededicate a part of the airwaves – which belong to all the people – and we dedicate them for the enlightenment of all the people."

The 2021 Strategic Plan was crafted with President Johnson's statement in mind. The WCTE Strategic Planning Committee developed this plan with valuable contributions from key stakeholders, community advisory board members, board of trustees, the staff and leadership team of WCTE PBS, under the direction of nationally recognized public media consultant, Kate Sandweiss.

Of course, the success of any plan is in its' implementation. As we move forward with this ambitious and well calculated strategy we have an action plan that aligns our three year goals with our mission and vision.

This plan is dedicated to the hard working men and women who give of their time, treasure and talent within our station, our community and our region to best serve the people of the Upper Cumberland. We recognize that WCTE PBS has been built by generations of people who have helped grow it to this point of being ready for the next phase of public media in Central Tennessee. After all as Ken Burns said "It is the arrogance of the present to forget the intelligence of the past."

It is with grateful hearts that we lean into this strategic vision set forth for 2021 – 2024 and submit it for your review.

Sincerely,

Becky Magura
WCTE PBS President / CEO

Nina Lunn
UCBC Chair of the Board

Avery Hutchins
WCTE PBS Station Manager

OPENING STATEMENT

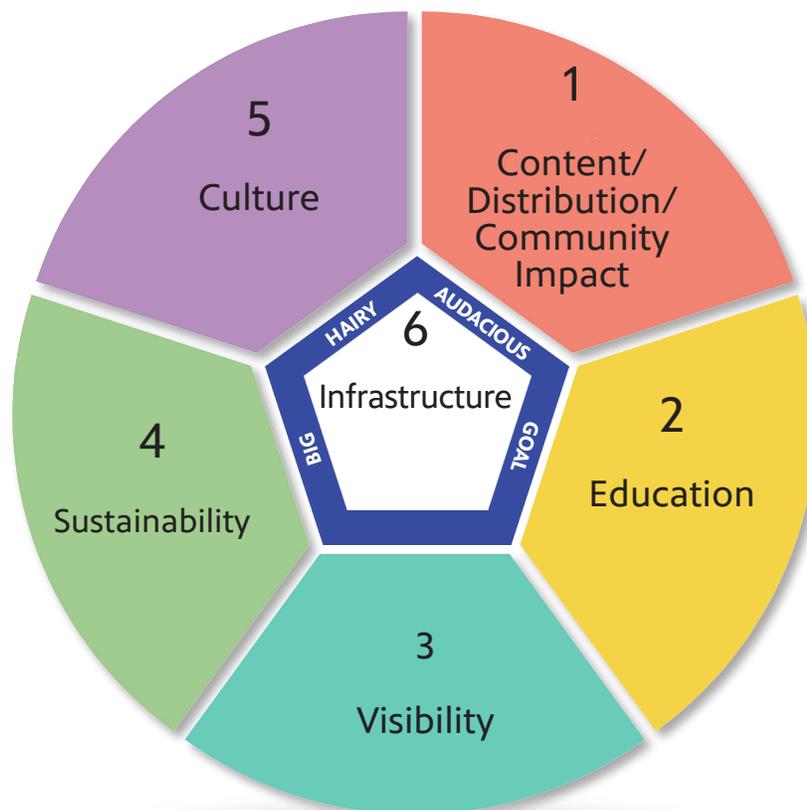
At a time of significant change in media for this country, WCTE Central TN PBS is resolute in our commitment to deliver independent, trusted local content and quality noncommercial programming while educating, inspiring and engaging our region.

VISION

An educated, informed and inclusive region.

MISSION

WCTE PBS uses public media to inspire lifelong learning and to give voice to Central Tennessee.



BIG HAIRY AUDACIOUS GOAL

Increase the number of memberships 30% and sustainer memberships 15% by 2024.

VALUES

TRUST

Act with integrity to maintain and build on the confidence placed in us by our region.

SERVICE

Provide unique value to help meet needs and strengthen the region's vitality.

INCLUSIVENESS

Welcome and respect all people while inspiring others to do the same.

EXCELLENCE

Achieve a high level of quality, productivity, and service.

1. CONTENT / DISTRIBUTION / COMMUNITY IMPACT



WCTE PBS produces content that will strengthen civic life. To do so, we must be aware of community needs and priorities, and understand which media platforms people use to get information and entertainment. We educate, inspire, and entertain our audiences using broadcast, digital platforms and in-person events.

- 1.1** Identify community needs and align financially supported local content with relevant national content.
- 1.2** Reach a broader and more diverse audience through digital storytelling and targeted distribution strategies.
- 1.3** Increase, evaluate and report on the social value of our content.

2. EDUCATION



As a full PBS member station, our primary mission is to educate, inspire, and provide lifelong learning in the Upper Cumberland region. We use nationally renowned educational materials and create needs-based content to serve our region. Through our strategic partnerships and community engagement, we make our educational content and services more widely available.

- 2.1** Support the success of educators and learners in Pre K-12th grade by providing standards based content.
- 2.2** Support lifelong learning in the Upper Cumberland region by collaborating with strategic partners to leverage local and national resources.
- 2.3** Support workforce development / career education with national, state, and regional stakeholders.

3. VISIBILITY



WCTE PBS will create stronger recognition of the brand in order to continue service the public.

- 3.1** Develop and maintain a communication plan that can further the brand and educate the broader public about the positive impact that WCTE PBS has on our rural and diverse communities.

- 3.2** Broaden and deepen engagement with like-minded organizations and individuals who will strengthen our mission and the community.

4. SUSTAINABILITY



WCTE will continuously refine and implement a sustainable funding model in order to ensure that WCTE can provide valued content and services to our region.

- 4.1** Increase and sustain a diversified revenue stream.

- 4.2** Evolve and strengthen WCTE's financial infrastructure to best serve the region.

- 4.3** Maintain a balanced operating budget using data driven decisions.

5. CULTURE



WCTE PBS is committed to creating an intentional, mission-focused work environment that embraces diversity, equity and inclusion – a sense of belonging.

5.1 Increase organizational effectiveness by strengthening staffs' clarity of purpose, planning skills, data driven decision making, accountability to established metrics and knowledge of the standard operating procedures.

5.2 Create an internal culture that embraces WCTE's mission and values, and recognizes the value of being a PBS member station.

5.3 Build WCTE's ability to serve the region by investing in key stakeholders' education and ongoing training.

6. INFRASTRUCTURE (Engineering / IT)



WCTE must fully support and sustain reliable service to the region on multiple platforms, including over-the-air broadcast, and through cable, satellite and digital streaming providers. Strengthening the infrastructure also allows us to improve the efficiency of communications and work processes.

6.1 Develop maintenance and budgetary plans to fund upgrades and replacement of long-term critical infrastructure.

6.2 Increase signal reliability, redundancy, and reach.

6.3 Prepare for ATSC 3.0 also known as NextGen TV.

6.4 Determine the feasibility of establishing a permanent home for WCTE PBS.

UPPER CUMBERLAND BROADCAST COUNCIL 2021

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WCTE PBS ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Public Media is needed than ever, possibly even more than when it was first conceived over 50 years ago. What the last eighteen months have taught us is how important mass communication and being agents of community connection, education, public health and inclusion is to the foundation of our mission, especially in adding to strength and solidarity of our region.

WCTE PBS today, and in the future, can use our tradition of entertainment and education, and expand those to new media and platforms. It can provide journalism with integrity, lifelong learning, celebration of music, culture and food; and be an examples of diversity, inclusion and equity within the content we provide and the communities we serve.

Serving and expanding minds, creating opportunities for new talent, celebrating diversity and inclusion in music, voices, stories, and news gathering is the very foundation of public media..

We are at a turning point for our industry and our nation. WCTE PBS is a station that has been on the front lines in Central Tennessee and the rural region of the Upper Cumberland. We have also been at the table with state and national leaders so that we may reach our full potential in mission, vision and values as a premier public media station, serving this vibrant, diverse and culturally rich region of Tennessee.

PBS is the home of independent film as well as music and the arts. It has a rich history of providing early literacy content and encouraging parents to be their child's first teacher.

PBS has captured our nation's history and explored the realms of science and nature. WCTE PBS has provided all of that and more over our 43 year history as a full member of PBS, and has cultivated our regions' stories and culture to share locally, regionally and nationally.

Recognizing the vulnerability of our youngest citizens in both urban and rural communities, Tennessee Public Television became the link to those without television and educational access. We been a leader in working with all of the Tennessee PBS stations in delivering this service on behalf of the Tennessee Department of Education, for a coordinated effort of programming and service, including educational datacasting.

WCTE PBS is part of a rich and varied industry. At a time when some question the need for public media, we must be diligent in telling our story and reaching new audiences. There is a natural synergy between public television and all involved in public safety, public health, public education, workforce development and economic development. Through our consistent, collaborative work with strategic partners. we can create a unique tapestry of service throughout our region. All of the citizens we serve in Central Tennessee depend on our strength and solidarity.

WCTE Central TN PBS will play a vital role in the future of public media in Tennessee and our nation. The upcoming media landscape will require an understanding of the needs of a rural region; the needs of a culturally diverse demographic; the needs of embracing a digital culture that distributes across multiple platforms.

These are challenging times as our world has been hit with a global pandemic. COVID 19 continues to morph into many variants that plague our communities and tax our healthcare and economic infrastructure.

In addition to this health crisis, our own region has been hit hard with weather-related catastrophes, from devastating tornados, floods and daily challenges for farm families.

WCTE PBS ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN *(continued)*

While the Upper Cumberland region has less than 15% ethnic diversity, incoming families that are culturally and ethnically diverse must find an inclusive and welcoming environment. We are seeing increased numbers in Hispanic and non-English speaking citizens.

Our economic health is improving, but still far below the national average. Recent 2021 statistics show the average weekly wage in the Upper Cumberland is \$757 in comparison to \$1,231 nationally and \$1,060 statewide. A current challenge of employers is finding a skilled workforce. With technology influencing every aspect of our society, we must have a workforce that can embrace and excel in that technical infrastructure. Unemployment is much less than a year ago (from 9/6% in 2020 to 4.5% in 2021), but the frustration of many businesses is finding those willing to work, especially in the hospitality industry. In a state heavily influenced by tourism, that's a challenge. All of these factors result in slowing regional productivity and growth.

Our public health is also at risk from generational poverty; lack of medical access in rural regions; the need for increased mental health for all target populations including teens and the ever present influence of drugs and alcohol. This pandemic has shown all of us the vulnerability of serving our citizens and yet with all of the public health and educational resources poured into protecting our region, by providing free COVID 19 screenings and vaccinations, we continue to have less than 43% fully vaccinated.

Our public education system continues to go above and beyond for Tennessee families, but lack of reliable broadband access brings to light again the vulnerability of those without access during a critical time for serving students with at-home-learning. Even with heroic efforts over the past year, recent test scores from the TN Department of Education showed a 5% decrease, highlighting the learning loss among Tennessee students last year.

In each of these areas, WCTE PBS is critical to serving these at-risk communities and bringing an inspired solution in content, lifelong learning, relevant and current information, enlightening the public through broadcast, datacasting and multiple digital platforms. WCTE is the conduit for community communication and through strategic partnerships, we provide a broader reach for those important, lifesaving messages.

ATSC 3.0, the new broadcast standard, also known as NextGen TV, will be critical to elevate across the state within public media to continue these important areas of service. This new increase in bandwidth will provide greater reach, clarity of signal, but more importantly expanded spectrum for designated services such as enhanced educational datacasting, telehealth, workforce development and public safety. WCTE Central TN and all six stations in Tennessee must position themselves in this rapidly changing media landscape to be NextGen TV ready and to provide the long range plans and service models that will make the most of this new technology.

What will these next three years bring to our nation, our state and our region? We can only imagine, but our citizens depend on WCTE being part of that innovative and intentional reimaging of rural communities that will embrace increased industrial demand; stretch our health and educational infrastructure to operate in ways unknown and to welcome new and culturally rich families arriving daily. Not only must WCTE PBS continue to tell the stories of our region but we must share them with the state and nation as well as be strategically positioned to serve as an essential partner for our region.

From one neighbor to another, WCTE Central TN PBS continues to be here for you!



WCTE PBS STRATEGIC VISION 2021–2024

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